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portant as widespread, culminating in a real revival of Jewish learning.

It is ungracious to find fault with the well from which we have just slaked our thirst, but it is impossible to resist expressing the regret that in a work presenting the imperial proportions, as it were, we have endeavoured to draw, there should have been included names of those whose work lies rather before them than after. We have said the worst; and it may be that this little spot but serves, after all, to bring out the extreme fairness of the rest of the page.

Concluding, we can but re-echo the words of the writer who has said: "Christianity will learn from it to understand Judaism and to respect Jews. Jews will learn from it to understand and respect themselves."

H. SNOWMAN.

#### MACLEAN'S "VERNACULAR SYRIAC."

*A Dictionary of the Dialects of Vernacular Syriac*, as spoken by the Eastern Syrians of Kurdistan, North-West Persia, and the Plain of Moṣul, with illustrations from the dialects of the Jews of Zakhū and Azerbaijan, and of the Western Syrians of Tur 'Abdin and Ma'lula, by ARTHUR JOHN MACLEAN, M.A., F.R.G.S., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1891, 4to, pp. xxiii and 334.

MORE than thirty years ago Prof. Noeldeke expressed the hope that a dictionary of modern Syriac dialects would be compiled from materials gathered among the Nestorian population east of the Tigris without regard to the classical language, and that in so doing special attention might be paid to the vernacular of the Jews living in the district. Since then much valuable linguistic research has been accomplished in this field, both in the publication of texts and their utilization for grammatical purposes. The great vitality of this group of dialects is illustrated by the fact, that amidst a population of different creed and languages it not only held its own but penetrated further east, supplanting a tongue spoken of old in these territories. Geographically speaking, the dialects in question form the vernacular of many villages situated in a large triangle, comprising the Plain of Moṣul, Lake Van and the Urmiah lake. Even a comparatively short examination will reveal the fact that these dialects are distinctly different from classical Syriac, and the appellation *Fellihi*, selected by Prof. Sachau (*Skizze des Fellihi-Dialekts von Moṣul*, Berlin, 1895), has therefore much in its favour. It is but

natural that it is largely influenced by the Turkish dialects spoken in Kurdistan by Persian, and particularly by Arabic, since this language forms the vernacular of the town of Moṣul. Through the translation of the Bible also many Hebrew words have crept in. In presenting his book Mr. Maclean has given a supplement not only to his own grammatical work on the subject published five years ago, but has furnished most valuable aid to the study of the large literature of the dialects now available. Till lately our information as to the existence and importance of this branch of Semitic philology was very scant. The merit of this work cannot, therefore, be easily overrated, and he may rest assured of the sincere thanks of Semitic students.

In an appendix to his *Grammar* Mr. Maclean has given a few specimens of a translation of some Psalms by an Azerbaijan Jew. In so doing he has only whetted our appetite for more. It would be desirable to obtain larger pieces of translation or of original compositions either liturgical or secular. It is more than probable that such exist. Mr. Maclean gives instances showing that the Jewish pronunciation of certain words varies slightly from that of their compatriots. Moreover, the nearer relation of the eastern dialects to that of the Babylonian Talmud justifies the expectation that linguistic research in these provinces would prove advantageous for the lexicography as well as for the phonology of the Talmud.

Mr. Maclean is undoubtedly right in emphasizing the fact that translators are apt to err on the side of literalness, and often employ words not used colloquially; but in spite of this the style remains homely, as the standard of education of the Jews in East Syrian countries is not very high. We may safely presume that the peculiarities of their language will, on the whole, run parallel with those of the Jews living in Arabic-speaking countries and in Persia, and that they are possessed of original compositions, however modest. It is of no small interest to observe that the language of the Talmud may still be considered a living one, and capable of being preserved and cultivated.

The addition of cross-references to Western Syriac dialects and the language of the Pshittā, as also the transliteration of all words and phrases in Roman characters in Mr. Maclean's book, greatly assists the student. Although his works signify a great advance in the study of the Eastern Aramaic dialects, we may hope that further investigation on the spot will be fruitful also in a direction which runs beside the main road.

H. HIRSCHFELD.